Ban on Gutkha and PAN Masala

530. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to impose a country-wide ban on Gutkha and Pan Masala in the light of serious health hazards posed by its consumption;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) The Government introduced a draft legislation namely, "The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Bill, 2001" for discouraging the consumption of tobacco and tobacco prc ducts including Gutkha.

The above mentioned Bill was subsequently referred to the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development in March, 2001. The Committee presented its report to Rajya Sabha in December, 2001 recommending a number of changes. These have been examined in consultation with other Departments. The amendments are in the process of being introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

Under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, the State Food [Health] Authorities have the independent power to prohibit the same of any article of food in the interest of public health. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have prohibited the sale of Gutkha/Pan Masala (containing tobacco) etc. under the said provisions.

Irregularities in the purchase of medicines by DG

531. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any investigation is being conducted against the DG for the irregularities in the purchase of medicines; and